

**EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES**

Meeting of October 1, 2008

Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center
3300 Briggs Chaney Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

Members Present: Kim Bobola, Ph.D. (Chair), Bill Strassberger (Parliamentarian), Thomas Aylward, G. Stanley Doore, Allan Mulligan, John Thomas, Vanessa Ali, Kimberly Campbell, Ph.D., Sheala Durant, Eric Luedtke, Dwayne Parris, Alfreda Hunt Payne, Anthony Ramirez, Benoy Thomas, John Fausti, Esq., and Marva R. Deskins, Esq.

Members Absent: Colleen Ionata (Vice Chair) and David Kochanski.

Staff: Anise Key Brown (Director, Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center) and Gwen Haney (Program Specialist, EMRSC)

Guests: Claire Iseli (Staff, Councilmember Don Praisner's office), Mara M. Parker (Staff, Councilmember Marc Elrich's office), Roylene Roberts (Department of Housing and Community Affairs), Frank Caruso (Greencastle Lakes Community Association), Robert Dongu (Gazette), Stuart Rochester, Faith Engled, Rev. Jeff Jones, Elmer Diaz, Jeremy Beck, Shawn Burnett, Del. Karen Montgomery, Khalid Afzal (Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning), Vernice Buell, Lois Purnell, A. Culves, R. Zimmerman, Y. Katz, G. Quiamber, Jetthip, Eileena York (Burtonsville Business Association), Debra Block, Barbara Foresti

Citizen's Forum: Chair Bobola welcomed everyone. Guests were asked to introduce themselves to the Board, and address any concerns or issues they had. No concerns were mentioned.

Call to Order: The chair called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m.

Chair Bobola introduced and welcomed special guests **Councilmember Don Praisner** and **Delegate Karen Montgomery**.

Chair Bobola then introduced the evening's speakers, representing the consulting firms of Basile Baumann Prost Cole & Assoc., Inc. and Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc., who prepared the **Burtonsville Legacy Plan**. This is a presentation of the final plan.

Speakers:

Kate Shiflet (Consultant) advised that the purpose of the Burtonsville Legacy Plan is to provide a blueprint for future action in Burtonsville, but that it is not a master plan and will involve no land use or zoning changes to the master plan. Ms. Shiflet reviewed outcomes of the previously held Burtonsville Legacy Charrette which produced four scenarios of possibilities developed from community pros and cons. The consultants then took a blend of the four scenarios to create a plan that was seen as most conducive to being implemented. The **final plan** would widen Route 198 and possibly include traffic mitigating roundabouts. Additionally, changes to the

commercial area would be primarily to business facades, and bikeways and sidewalks would provide connectivity.

Kevin Fisher (Consultant) introduced the **short-term elements** of the plan to be implemented during the first five years. He noted that the plan's focus is on the core commercial area north of Route 198. Short-term elements include the following:

- Road widening and streetscape improvements along Route 198, including the creation of gateways at the Route 29 bridge and at the Burtonsville access road;
- Driveway and parking reconfiguration to accommodate new sidewalks, street trees, and signage;
- Parking reconfigured to go behind commercial areas;
- Pedestrian and bicycle paths to connect the village center to the community green space; and
- Community green space and gathering area next to the school.

Ms Shiflet reviewed the plan's **long-term objectives** (6-10 years) which include the following:

- Relocation of Route 29 signage;
- Streetscape enhancements along Route 29 in the Burtonsville commercial area;
- Encouragement of a variety of housing options in the Community Legacy area;
- A parallel road south of Route 198;
- A possible parking structure;
- Green and low-impact design of buildings and public spaces; and
- An expanded Burtonsville employment center with new buildings, businesses, and jobs.

The "Next Steps" included preparation of an application to the State Department of Housing and Community Development for Community Legacy funds and an ongoing process of implementation.

Chair Bobola reviewed the highlights and opened the presentation for questions from Board members.

Allan Mulligan noted that it would be nice if utility lines were put underground and asked by what authority resident driveways would be removed. **Mr. Fisher** noted that driveways would not be removed but relocated. **Roylene Roberts**, of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, replied that underground wiring was cost-prohibitive. Ms. Roberts also said there is added confusion because the State Highway Administration has a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to build a new highway in this area but its location is unknown – people don't know where the edge of their property will be.

G. Stan Doore asked what plans had been made to address congestion on Route 198.

Ms. Shiflet replied that an access road to enter and leave businesses was intended to mitigate traffic and sidewalks would give an alternative means to transportation.

Tom Aylward asked why not move things to the south side of Route 198 where the state has land already? **Ms. Shiflet** replied that there is better opportunity for enhancement on the

northern side. **Mr. Aylward** also asked if left turns could be eliminated by adding a non-penetrable median. **Mr. Fisher** replied the median area is too short.

John Thomas Asked how pedestrian traffic would cross Route 198. **Mr. Fisher** responded that pedestrians would need to go to one end or another since the State Highway Administration has denied a request for added traffic lights.

Bill Strassberger asked how to take this from a plan to reality. **Ms. Roberts** advised that the late Marilyn Praisner had made sure that some money from local government was available. Additional funds would be from businesses and some from residents. She noted that Burtonsville does not qualify for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Ms. Roberts will be talking with business property owners regarding facade improvements which were successfully accomplished in Silver Spring.

G. Stan Doore asked how the plan accommodated for additional housing. **Ms. Roberts** noted that there are no plans for housing at this time – the zoning does allow it and it would need exceptions for parking. **Ms. Shiflet** added that the housing mentioned in the plan is primarily referring to low density, live-work housing, and that there is long-term potential for it.

Claire Iseli asked why the relocation of Route 29 was a long-term element and not short-term since it is one of the identified problems. **Ms. Shiflet** said this possibly may need to be fast-tracked.

Chair Bobola opened the presentation for questions from guests. The following responses were provided by Ms. Shiflet, Mr. Fisher, and Ms. Roberts:

- Storm water management has been integrated into the plan.
- Truck and trailer access for deliveries has been incorporated.
- The developer of the shopping center has the financing and is ready to break ground. He is waiting to see what happens with the request for additional traffic lights.

Chair Bobola recapped the discussion, thanked all who participated, and noted that a key component was the “community involvement.” She recognized guest **Eileena York** of Citizens Involved, who worked to keep the community aware of the project and got people involved in the process.

Delegate Karen Montgomery stated that she lives in East County and that she gets upset because she sees other parts of the county get more attention and money because the community is not together. She acknowledged Kim Bobola and Anise Key Brown for their increased activity and said she will do whatever she can to help.

Approval of Minutes: [October 1, 2008 - 1] A motion to approve the minutes of September 3, 2008 without amendments was offered. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Chair Bobola also introduced and welcomed special guests **former Delegate Tod Sher**.

Director's Report: Anise Key Brown

- Welcomed Council President Don Praisner and offered him the floor
- Mr. Praisner stated that we have a “long way to go” and that we “need” to make Burtonsville attractive. He suggested that the businesses need to make this happen in the marketplace and property owners along Route 198 need to invest in their community as well.
- Anise Key Brown recapped the tragic traffic fatality on Fairland that occurred recently. She shared that there was very positive involvement on the part of the county government to assist and make sure it was a smooth and thorough investigation process. On November 19, County Executive Leggett will be meeting with the Fairland Community Association.
- In 2009, EMRSC will be holding an ICC forum to respond to concerns regarding how people will be affected.
- Fire Chief Tom Carr has retired and will take the position of Fire Chief in Charleston, South Carolina, his home town.
- The new directors of Human Rights and Emergency Management and Homeland Security are in place.
- Mr. Praisner added that there is a bill before the Council to ban large trucks from parking on streets and suggested that we will need to consider “where” these trucks are to go.

Chair's Report: Kim Bobola

- Introduced John Fausti, new Board member and his first Board meeting;
- Welcomed Marva Deskins back for her second year, and introduced her to the new Board members;
- Asked for the Board's assistance in getting the word out regarding the East County Leadership Summit through outreach via Board Quads (e.g., specific geographic areas); and
- Reminded that there is a training session for Summit facilitators next Wednesday, October 8, at 7:30 p.m.

Council's Report:

Claire Iseli (for Councilmember Praisner)

- With regards to Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning's reorganization, Route 29 will be recognized as a major transit area.
- An ongoing rewrite of zoning ordinances is occurring to simplify the zoning code and make it easier to use.
- County Council is seeking applicants for FY10 Grants Committee (information can be found on the County's web site).

Mara Parker (for Councilmember Elrich)

- Councilmember Elrich is involved with a Youth Development Initiative and is gathering information and targeting programs that work. This initiative has gone through 2 County Stat reports.

Committee Reports

Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee: Tom Aylward, Chair

- Reminded members to try to get to these committee meetings;
- Is tracking Burtonsville Legacy Plan issues;
- Giving attention to infrastructure needs and lack of coordination by federal, state, and county governments;
- Wants to see ICC bike trails back in the plans;
- Described a housing concern – our kids can not afford to live here. This requires a re-examination of current zoning.

Services Committee: Anthony Ramirez, Chair

- Looking at traffic concerns;
- Following crime situation –may invite police to attend meetings on a regular basis for updates;
- Plans to hold “community specific” forums;
- Looking into Paint Branch construction delays; and
- Drafting a letter to address safety concerns regarding new location of Post Office.
- Councilmember Praisner added that he has contacted Senator Ben Cardin’s Office and reminded them of this concern.

Outreach Committee: Marva Deskins, Chair

- Need 3 additional Board members to act as co-facilitators for the Leadership Summit;
- Set goals to attend local HOA and PTA meetings;
- Considering getting business cards for this committee; and
- Fredda Payne will coordinate an Adopt-a-Road project for Community Service Day (October 25th).

Old Business : None

New Business:

Eric Luedke stated that he also felt the County did a good job in reaching out to the community regarding the Fairland Road fatality. He drafted a letter to Art Holmes (Department of Public Works and Transportation), which he passed out to Board members.

[October 1, 2008 - 2] A move was made, seconded, and approved to discuss this issue. Some discussion followed.

[October 1, 2008 - 3] A subsequent move was made, seconded, and approved to send the letter with a minor modification.

Anise Key Brown advised new members she needed them to complete an information form.

Announcements

Sheala Durant thanked all who contributed to the Board's annual report which she hopes to have ready by next week. When complete, she encourages everyone to read this report.

Mara Parker stated that Councilmember Elrich wants to come to a Board meeting to share a county-wide bus rapid transit system and could he be put on a future agenda.

G. Stan Doore passed along a letter by Mahlon G. "Lon" Anderson, Director of Public and Government Affairs, which is in today's Gazette, on the effort by Parks & Planning to derail the revised Road Code; and said the letter revealed some efforts of Park & Planning staff to attempt to get their way.

He added that the county needs to pay more attention to current technology such as elevated walkways and diesel and electric for vehicles. He suggests this be put on future agendas.

Dr. Kim Campbell attended a meeting of the Northeast Consortium. She learned that principals from various schools are meeting with other principals (Elementary with Middle and Middle with High School) to maintain a smooth transition and support high academic standards.

Chair Bobola announced that there will be a meeting on the progress of Federal Drug Administration's consolidation at the CHI Center on Wednesday, October 29, at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

The next meeting of ECCAB is scheduled for November 5, 2008.